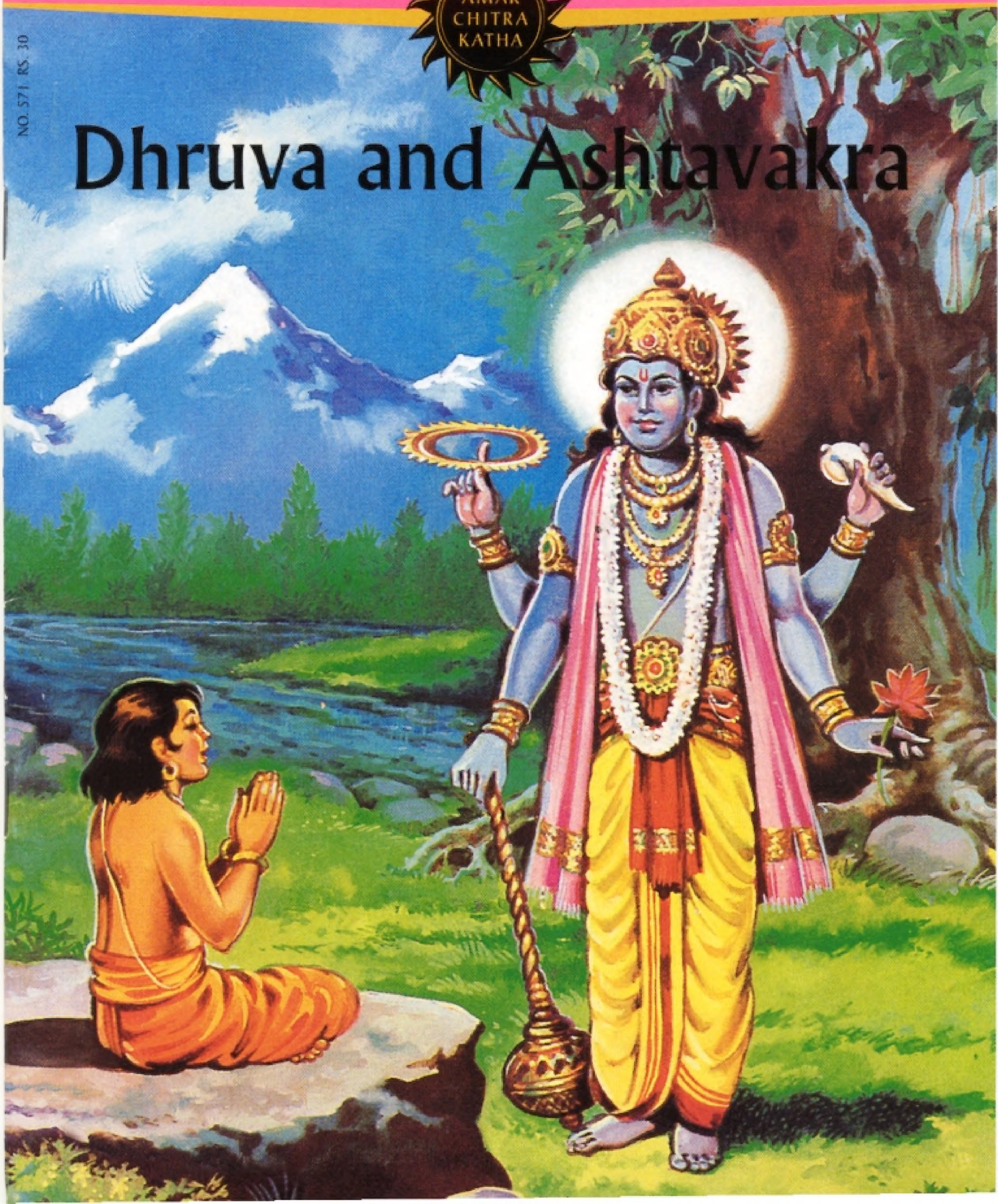


NO. 571 RS. 30



Dhruva and Ashtavakra





Illustrated Classics From India

Over 86 million copies of over 400 titles sold worldwide!

Amar Chitra Katha is a collection of illustrated classics that retell stories from Indian mythology, history, folktale and legend through the fascinating medium of comics. Over 430 stories from all over India have been told in this series that has been endorsed by educationists and recommended by teachers the world over.

Through a masterful blend of commentary, dialogue and illustration, Amar Chitra Katha presents complex historical facts and intricate mythology in a format that would appeal to children. They not only entertain, but also provide a fitting introduction to the cultural heritage of India. In a country so vast and varied, the series also serves as a medium for national integration, by introducing young readers to the rich cultural diversity of the country and highlighting the achievements of local heroes.

Amar Chitra Katha comics are like family heirlooms, passed down from generation to generation. These timeless illustrated classics are now also available online on www.AmarChitraKatha.com. Start your own collection today!

No. 571 • Rs 30



INDIA BOOK HOUSE

© India Book House Pvt. Ltd. 1976 Reprinted: June 2006 ISBN: 81-7508-068-X
Published and Printed by India Book House Pvt Ltd, Mahalaxmi Chambers,
5th Floor, 22 Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai 400 026, India.

DHRUVA



DHRUVA WAS THE SON OF SUNEETI, THE SENIOR QUEEN OF KING UTTANAPADA. UNFORTUNATELY FOR DHRUVA AND SUNEETI, UTTANAPADA LOVED SURUCHI, HIS SECOND QUEEN, BETTER AND WAS PARTIAL TO HER.

AH! HERE COMES QUEEN SURUCHI.

HER ONE AIM IS TO SEE HER SON, UTTAMA, CROWNED KING. POOR DHRUVA.



AS SURUCHI WALKED UP TO HER SON—

MOTHER, FATHER IS FREE. MAY I GO AND SIT ON HIS LAP?

CERTAINLY, MY SON. IT IS YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE AS THE FUTURE KING.



WHEN DHRUVA SAW UTTAMA SITTING ON UTTANAPADA'S LAP, HE RAN TOWARDS THEM.



* ANOTHER NAME FOR VISHNU.

STUNG BY HER WORDS, DHRUVA RAN CRYING TO HIS MOTHER.

WHY ARE YOU CRYING, DHRUVA? HAS ANYONE HURT YOU?

MOTHER SURUCHI SAID I HAD NO RIGHT TO SIT ON MY FATHER'S LAP.



SHE SAID ONLY UTTAMA HAD THE RIGHT TO SIT ON THE KING'S LAP.

SHE'S RIGHT, DHRUVA.



HOLDING BACK HER TEARS, SUNEETI HUGGED HIM AND CARRIED HIM IN.

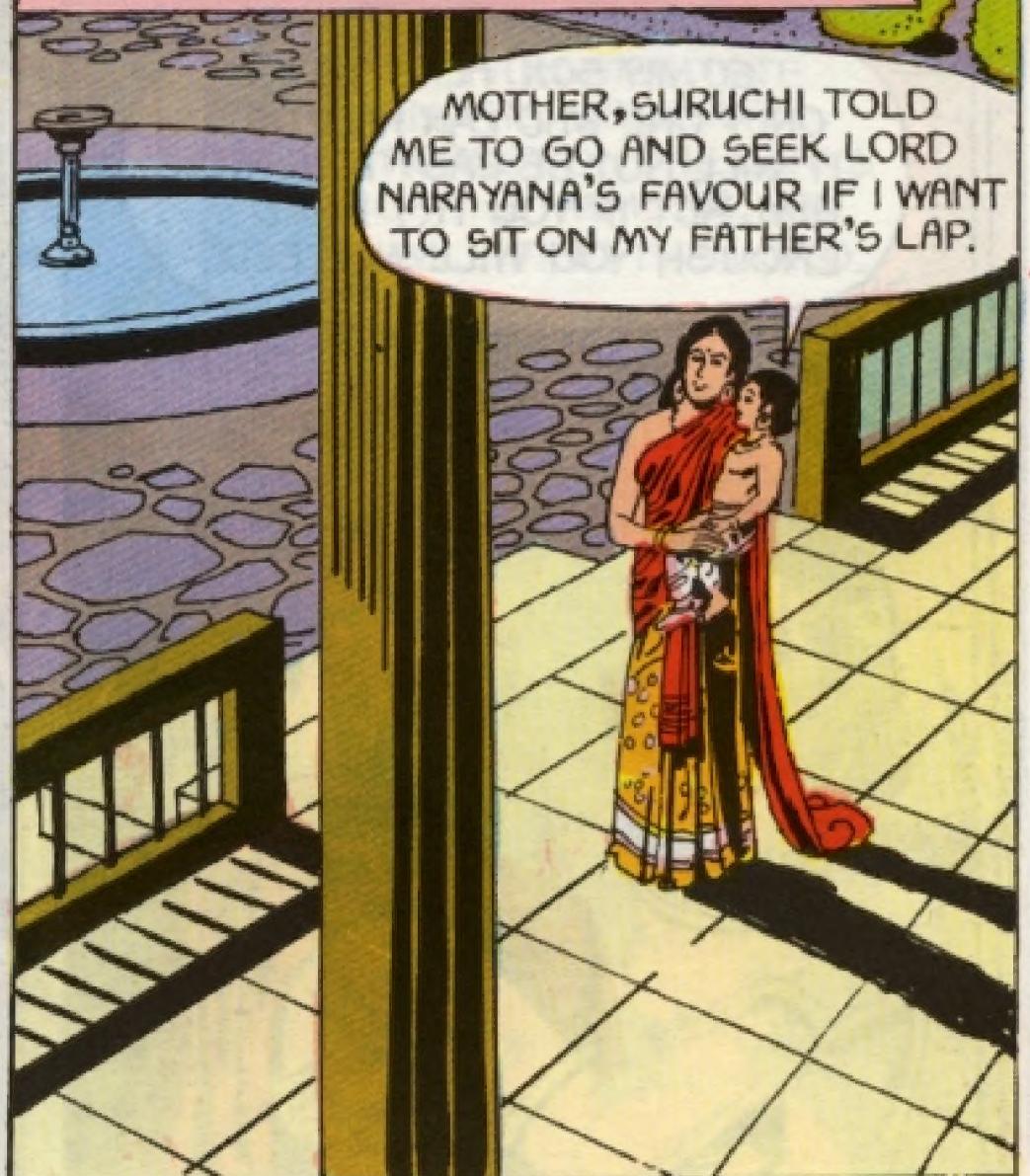
I AM A KSHATRIYA PRINCE, AM I NOT, MOTHER?

YES, MY CHILD.



SECURE IN HIS MOTHER'S ARMS, DHRUVA BECAME CALM AND THOUGHTFUL.

MOTHER, SURUCHI TOLD ME TO GO AND SEEK LORD NARAYANA'S FAVOUR IF I WANT TO SIT ON MY FATHER'S LAP.





MEANWHILE, SAGE NARADA CAME TO KNOW ABOUT SURUCHI'S HARSH WORDS AND DHRUVA'S RESOLVE.

HE IS A TRUE KSHATRIYA INDEED. THOUGH A MERE CHILD, HE WILL NOT BROOK THE INSULTS OF HIS STEP-MOTHER. YET WHAT HE SEEKS IS IMPOSSIBLE. I MUST SPEAK TO HIM.



NARADA WENT TO SEE DHRUVA.

MY CHILD, WHY DON'T YOU ACCEPT YOUR FATE AND GO BACK TO YOUR MOTHER?

O MASTER, I AM DHRUVA, THE SON OF MIGHTY UTTANAPADA, A KSHATRIYA. AND I AM DETERMINED TO WIN THE LORD'S FAVOUR.



I AM AWARE OF THAT, MY CHILD. BUT YOU ARE TOO YOUNG. IT IS NOT EASY TO FIND LORD NARAYANA. WHY DON'T YOU WAIT TILL YOU ARE A LITTLE OLDER?

FORGIVE ME, MASTER, BUT I WILL NOT TURN BACK. O WISE ONE, TELL ME HOW I CAN SUCCEED IN MY RESOLVE.



NARADA WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED BY HIS DETERMINATION.

IF YOU MEDITATE IN THE MADHUVAN FOREST ON THE BANKS OF THE YAMUNA, YOU WILL FIND THE LORD.

O SAINT, TEACH ME HOW TO MEDITATE.





AS DHRUVA SET OUT FOR MADHUVAN,
NARADA WENT TO THE PALACE OF
KING UTTANAPADA.



NARADA NOTICED THAT THOUGH UTTANA-
PADA WELCOMED HIM RESPECTFULLY, HIS
MIND WAS ELSEWHERE.



ALAS! HE HAS GONE
AWAY ALONE INTO THE
FOREST. THE BEASTS
WILL DEVOUR
HIM.



MEANWHILE, DHRUVA HAD REACHED MADHUVAN.



IN THE FIRST MONTH, HE LIVED ONLY ON THE FRUITS HE COULD FIND IN THE FOREST.



GRADUALLY HE GAVE UP EVEN THAT AND ATE ONLY GRASS AND LEAVES.



IN THE THIRD MONTH, HE STOPPED EATING AND LIVED ONLY ON WATER.



IN THE FOURTH MONTH, HE GAVE UP EVEN THAT AND LIVED ON AIR. THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD HE REPEATED THE MANTRA OVER AND OVER AGAIN.



IN THE FIFTH AND SIXTH MONTHS, HE EVEN STOPPED BREATHING.



DHRUVA'S CONCENTRATION STOPPED THE VERY AIR FROM FLOWING. THERE WAS PANIC IN HEAVEN...





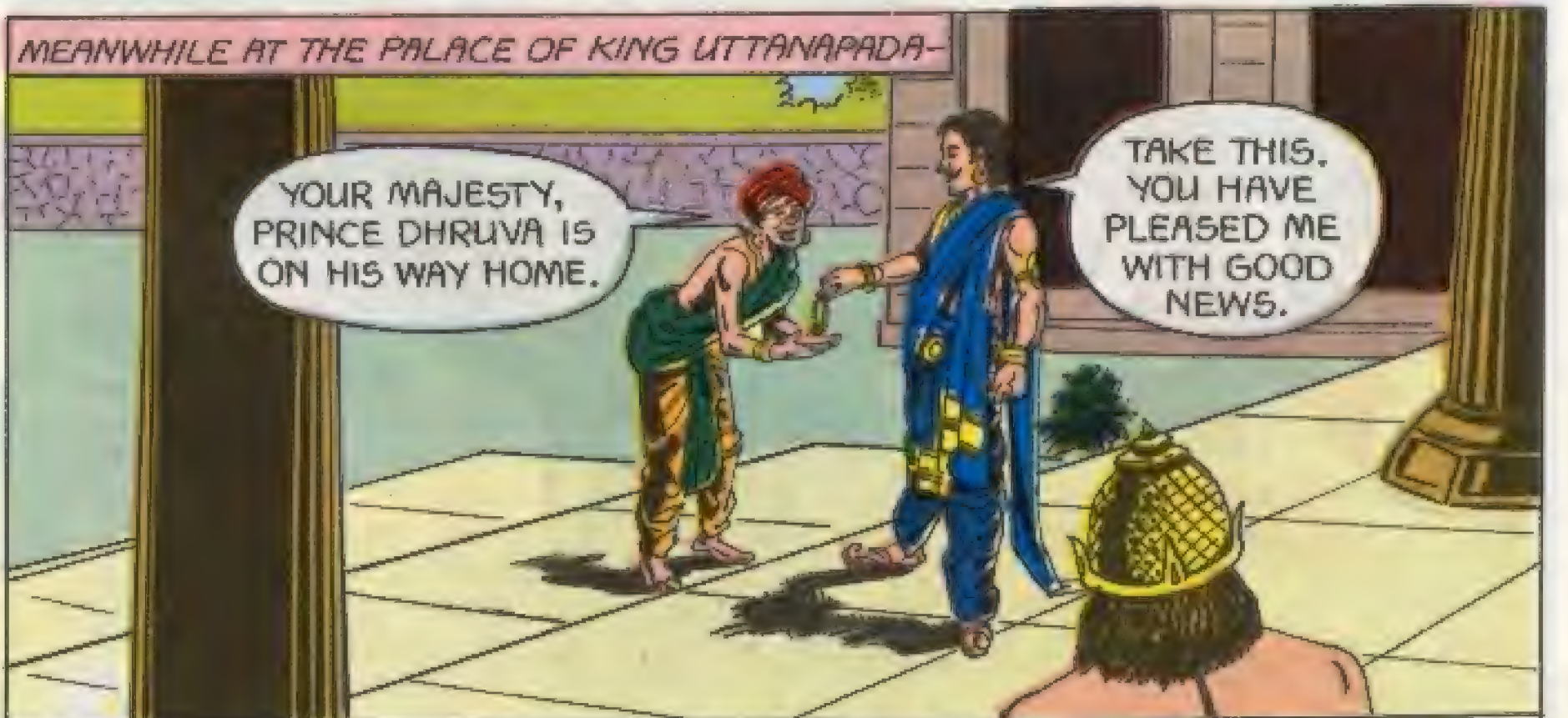
MEANWHILE, AS DHRUVA MEDITATED —

LORD, I THOUGHT
I HAD FOUND YOU BUT
YOU'VE SUDDENLY VAN-
ISHED. HAVE I FAILED IN
MY WORSHIP? HAVE I
DISPLEASED YOU? THEN
I SHALL START MEDI-
TATING ALL OVER AGAIN.

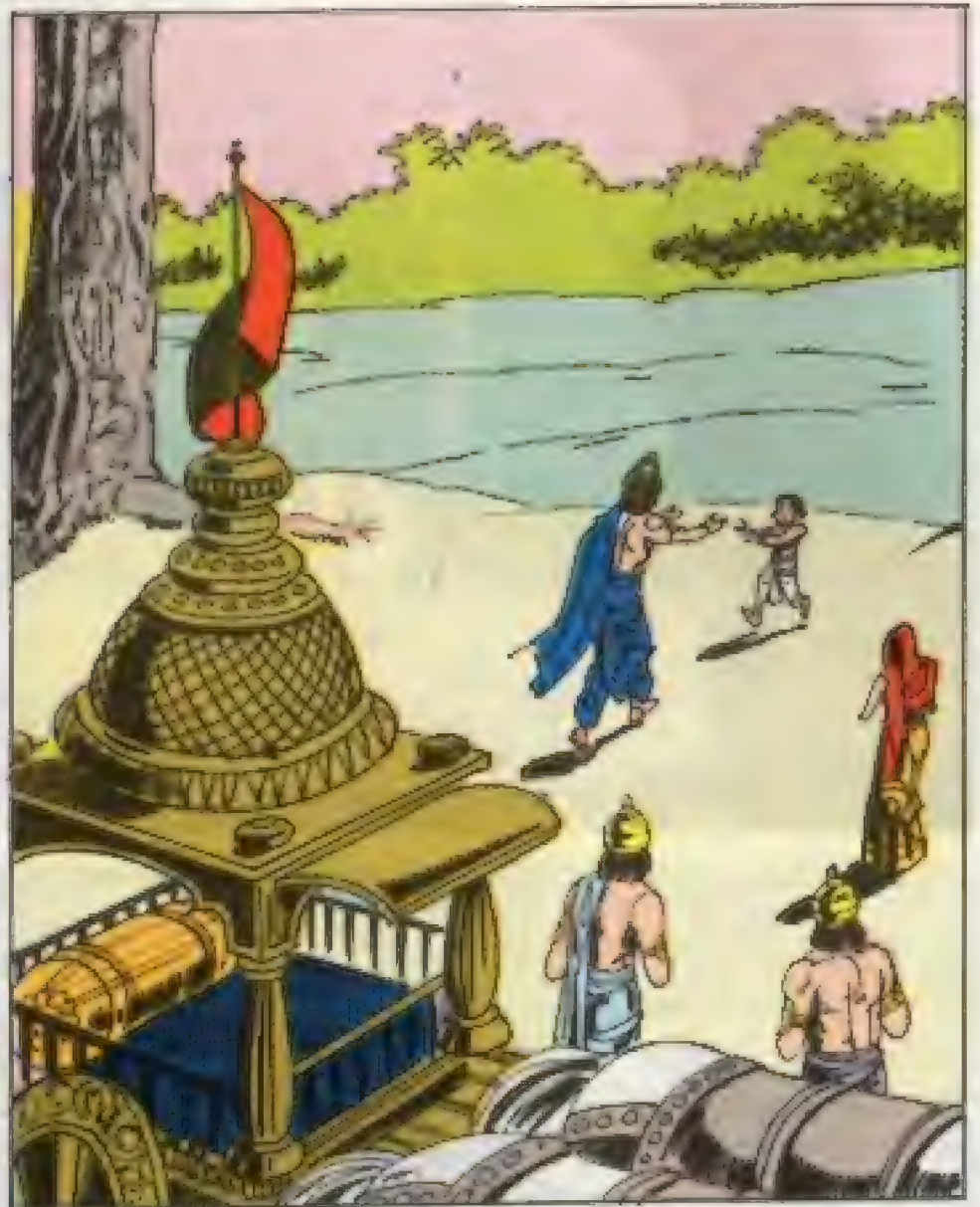
AND DHRUVA OPENED HIS EYES.

THE LORD
HAS COME
TO ME!





*THE POLE STAR TO THIS DAY IS KNOWN AS DHRUVA.



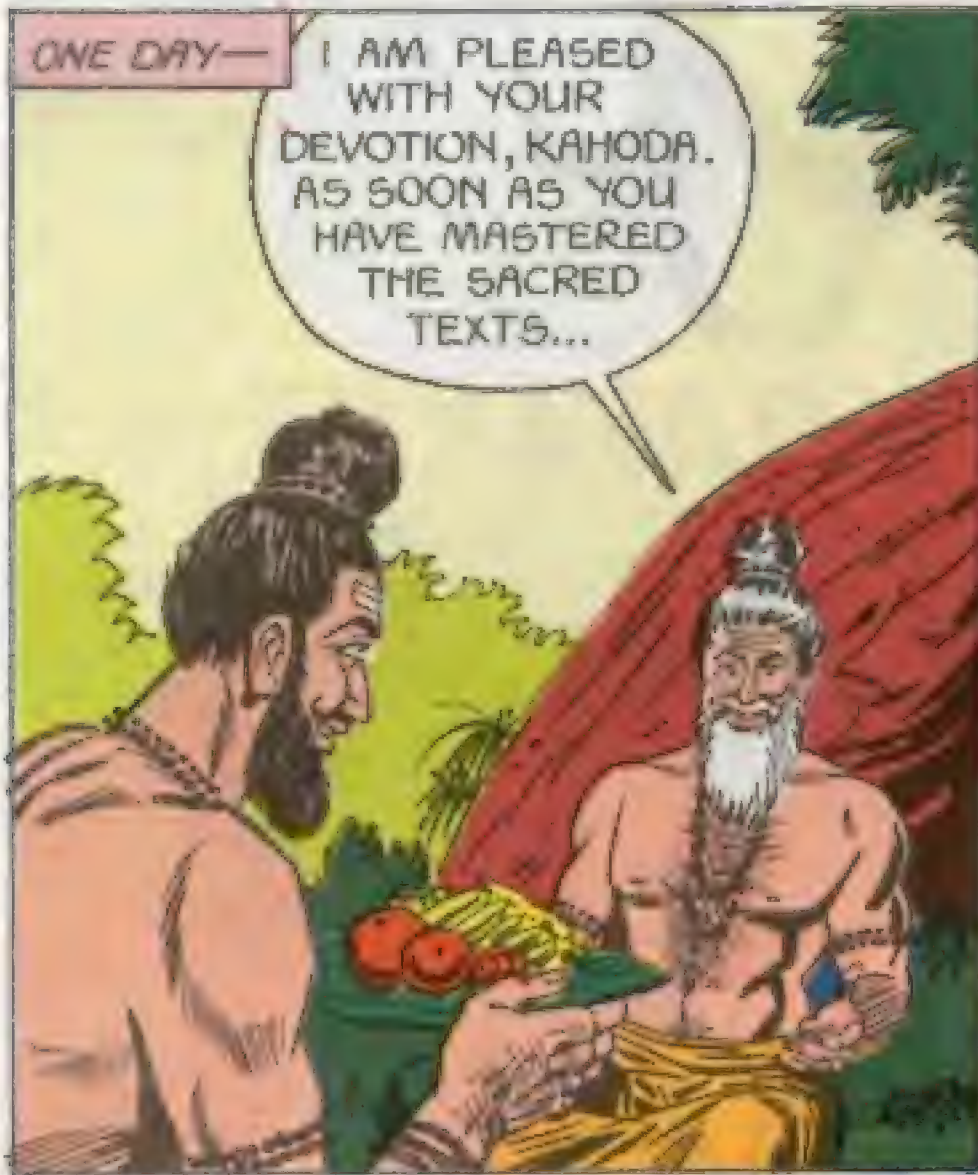
ASHTAVAKRA



KAHODA WAS THE FAVOURITE DISCIPLE OF UDDALAKA, A RENOWNED SCHOLAR IN THE VEDAS. UDDALAKA HAD A DAUGHTER CALLED SUJATA.

ONE DAY—

I AM PLEASED
WITH YOUR
DEVOTION, KAHODA.
AS SOON AS YOU
HAVE MASTERED
THE SACRED
TEXTS...



...YOU SHALL HAVE
MY DAUGHTER,
SUJATA, FOR
A WIFE



KAHODA WAS CLEVER AND HARD-
WORKING AND SOON MASTERED THE
TEXTS. AS HIS GURU HAD PROMISED
HE WAS MARRIED TO SUJATA.

YOU
MAY CONTINUE
TO LIVE HERE AT
THE ASHRAM,
AND TEACH YOUR
DISCIPLES.



THOUGH THEY HAD TO LEAD AN AUSTERE LIFE, KAHODA AND SUJATA WERE HAPPY IN SAGE UDDALAKA'S HERMITAGE.

MY LORD, WHEN WE HAVE A SON, HE MUST MASTER THE SACRED TEXTS AS YOU HAVE.

I SHALL SPARE NO PAINS TO TEACH HIM ALL . I KNOW.



A FEW MONTHS LATER, SUJATA BECAME PREGNANT.

I MUST EXPOSE MY CHILD TO THE SACRED INFLUENCE OF THE HYMNS EVEN WHILE HE IS IN THE WOMB.



SO SUJATA SAT BY HER HUSBAND AS HE RECITED VERSES FROM THE SCRIPTURES; AND THE CHILD IN HER WOMB SILENTLY ABSORBED WHAT THE LEARNED FATHER RECITED.



ONE DAY AS KAHODA SAT AMONG HIS DISCIPLES, INSTRUCTING THEM—

THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO CHANT THAT HYMN, FATHER.





WHO WAS THAT?
WHERE DID THAT
VOICE COME
FROM?



IT MUST
HAVE BEEN
THE VOICE OF
OUR UNBORN
CHILD.

SUCH
IMPERTI-
NENCE! AND
FROM ONE YET
UNBORN!

FURIOUS WITH HIS SON FOR PUT-
TING HIM TO SHAME BEFORE HIS
DISCIPLES, KAHODA CURSED HIM.

O VAIN SOUL! MAY YOU
BE BORN DEFORMED—
MAY YOUR BODY BE
TWISTED IN EIGHT
PLACES!

THE MONTHS ROLLED ON AND THE
TIME FOR SUJATA'S CONFINEMENT
DREW NEAR. ONE DAY—

OUR CHILD WILL
SOON BE BORN.
WE WILL NEED
MONEY TO
PROVIDE IT
WITH THE
COMFORTS
OF LIFE.

I WILL GO TO
KING JANAKA OF
MITHILA. HE IS
GENEROUS TO
LEARNED BRAH-
MANS. BESIDES,
HE IS AT THE
MOMENT PER-
FORMING A
GRAND YAGNA.



WHEN KAHODA REACHED MITHILA,
JANAKA WELCOMED HIM.

O REVERED SAGE, YOU
HAVE COME AT THE
RIGHT MOMENT.



A SCHOLAR NAMED
BANDHI HAS COME
TO MITHILA. NO
ONE CAN DEFEAT
HIM IN DEBATE.

LET ME
TRY,
O KING.

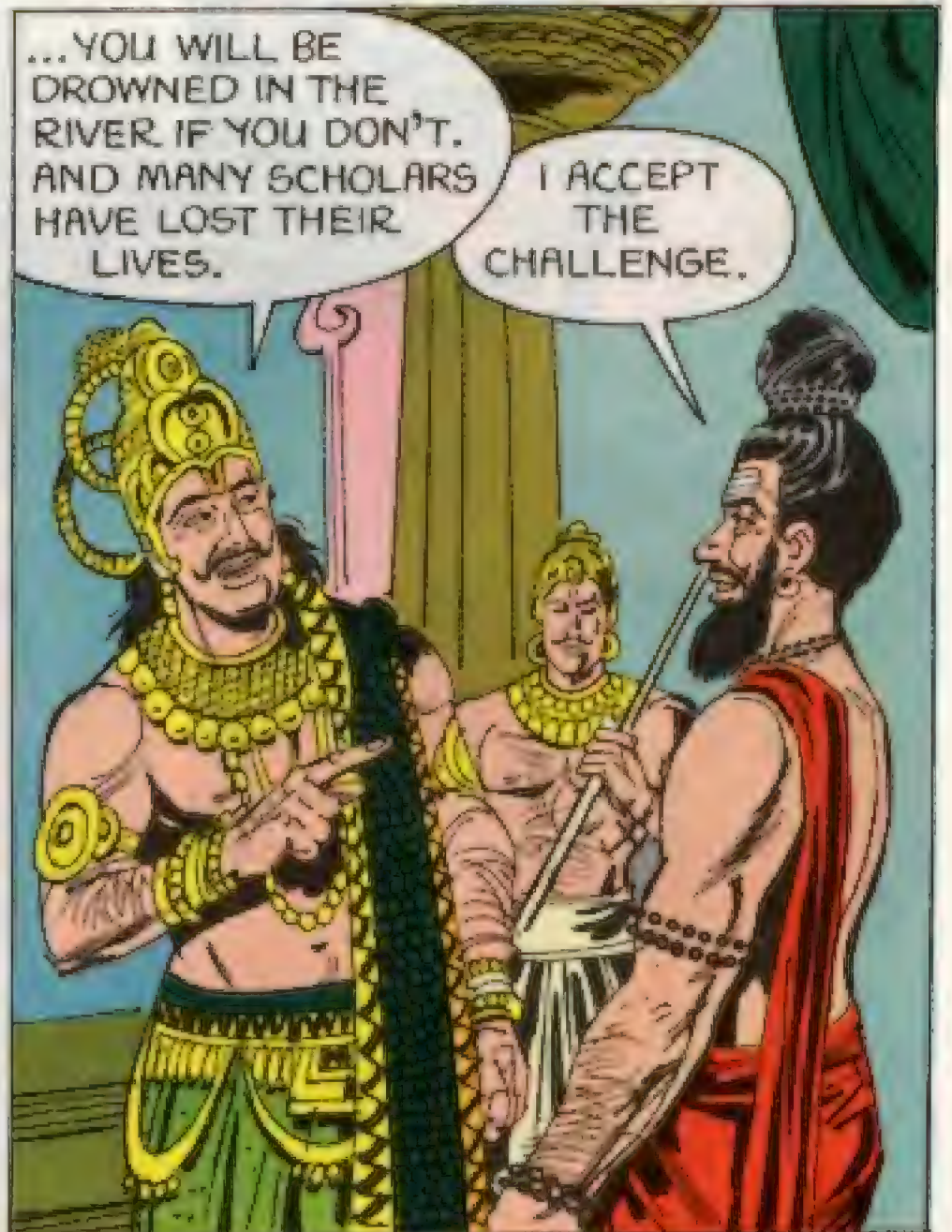


THINK IT OVER CAREFULLY.
THOUGH YOU WILL BE
WELL REWARDED IF
YOU WIN...



...YOU WILL BE
DROWNED IN THE
RIVER IF YOU DON'T.
AND MANY SCHOLARS
HAVE LOST THEIR
LIVES.

I ACCEPT
THE
CHALLENGE.



THE DEBATE BEGAN BUT DID NOT CONTINUE FOR LONG.
KAHODA WAS NO MATCH FOR BANDHI.

BANDHI HAS WON
AGAIN. POOR KAHODA
WILL BE DROWNED
LIKE ALL THE
OTHERS.



BANDHI WAS TRIUMPHANT.

MY MISSION
HERE IS PROVING
TO BE VERY
SUCCESSFUL.
I HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO DISPATCH
ONE MORE
SAGE.



BUT JANAKA WAS UNHAPPY.

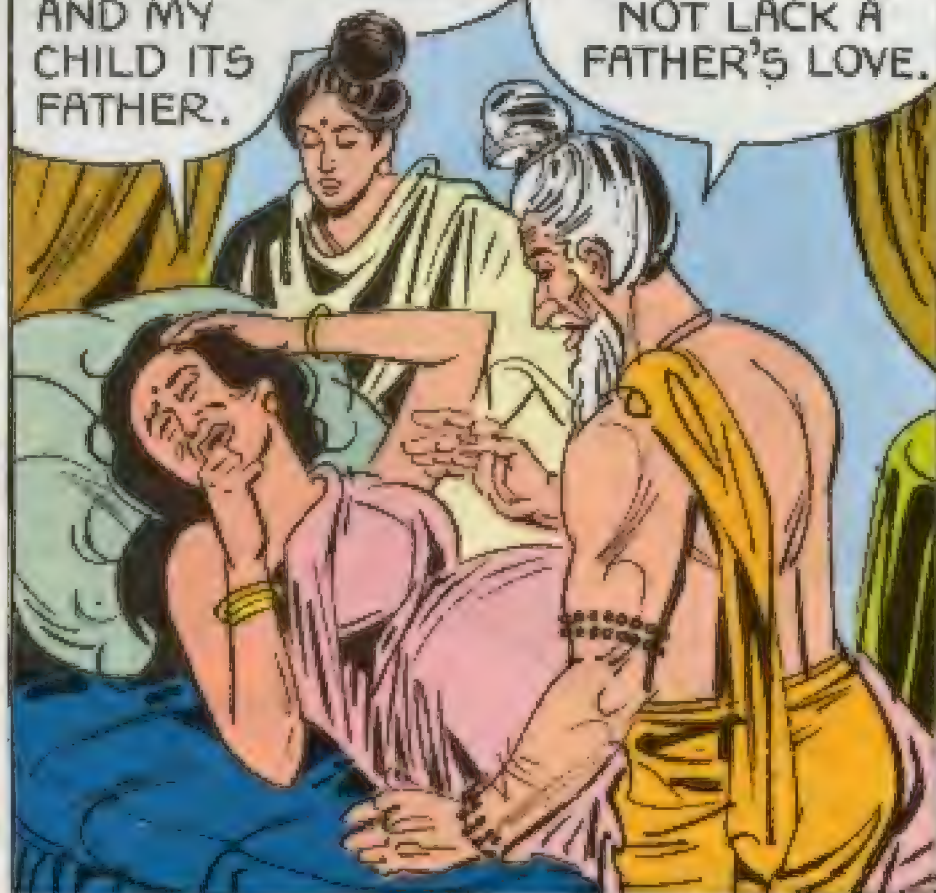
ALAS! I HAVE LOST ONE MORE SAGE WHO CAME TO ATTEND THE YAGNA. HOW WILL THE YAGNA BE A SUCCESS?



WHEN THE NEWS REACHED SUJATA, SHE BROKE DOWN.

ALAS! MY DESIRE FOR WEALTH HAS COST ME MY HUSBAND AND MY CHILD ITS FATHER.

DON'T GRIEVE, SUJATA. YOUR CHILD SHALL NOT LACK A FATHER'S LOVE.



A FEW DAYS LATER SUJATA HAD A BABY.

ALAS! HIS BODY IS DEFORMED IN EIGHT PLACES.

LET HIM BE CALLED ASHTAVAKRA*. MY WIFE TOO HAS JUST BEEN BLESSED WITH A SON. WE HAVE NAMED HIM SHWETAKETU.



GROWING UP UNDER THE TENDER, LOVING CARE OF UDDALAKA...



*CROOKED IN EIGHT PLACES.

...ASHTAVAKRA SOON BEGAN TO
LOOK UPON HIM AS HIS FATHER.



THE YEARS ROLLED ON.
UDDALAKA TAUGHT ASHTA-
VAKRA AND SHWETAKETU.



WHEN THE BOYS WERE TWELVE YEARS OLD—

YOU
HAVE MASTERED
THE VEDAS. I AM
PROUD OF YOU,
MY SON.





AND SUJATA TOLD HIM ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

I MUST
DEFEAT BANDHI
AND HAVE HIM
DROWNED.



THAT NIGHT—

COME ON, SHWETAKETU.
LET US GO TO MITHILA. IT
WILL BE A GOOD EXPERI-
ENCE FOR US. KING
JANAKA HAS NOT BEEN
ABLE TO COMPLETE THE
YAGNA HE STARTED
TWELVE YEARS AGO.



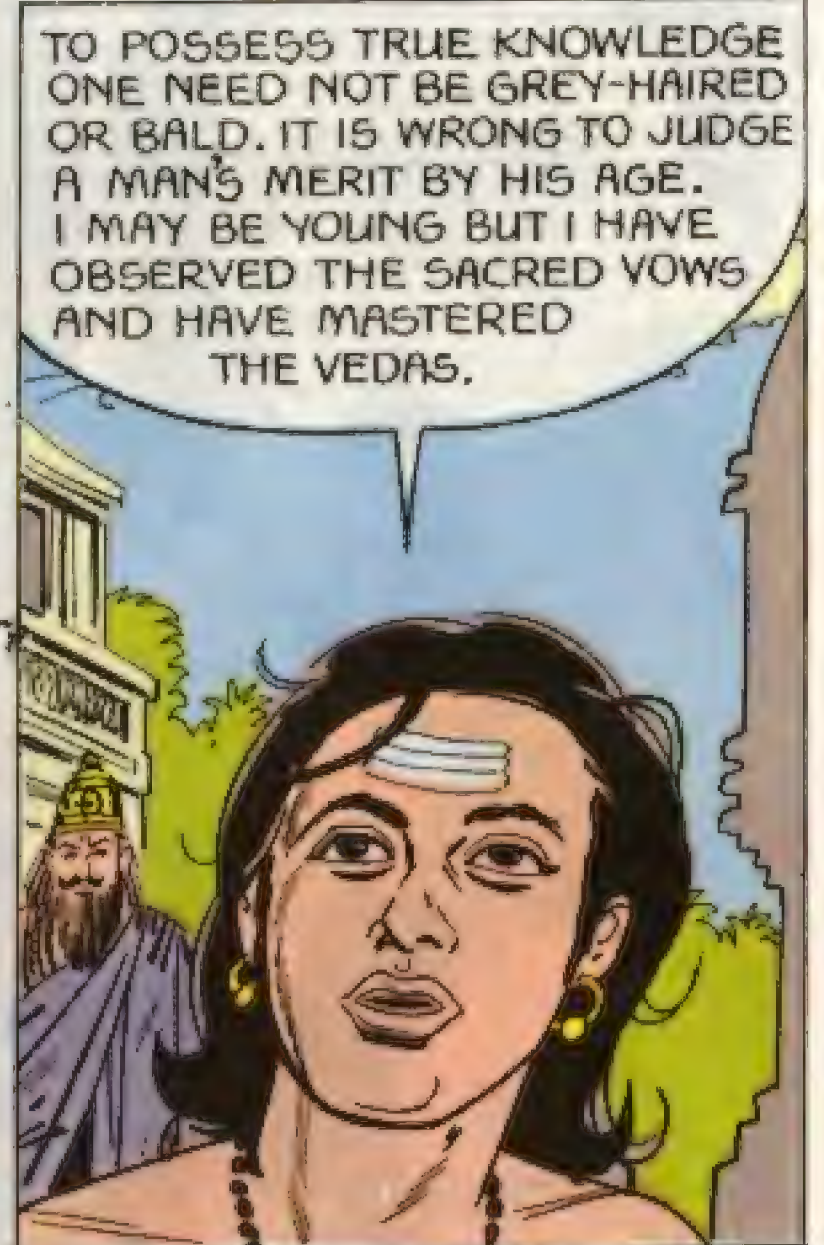
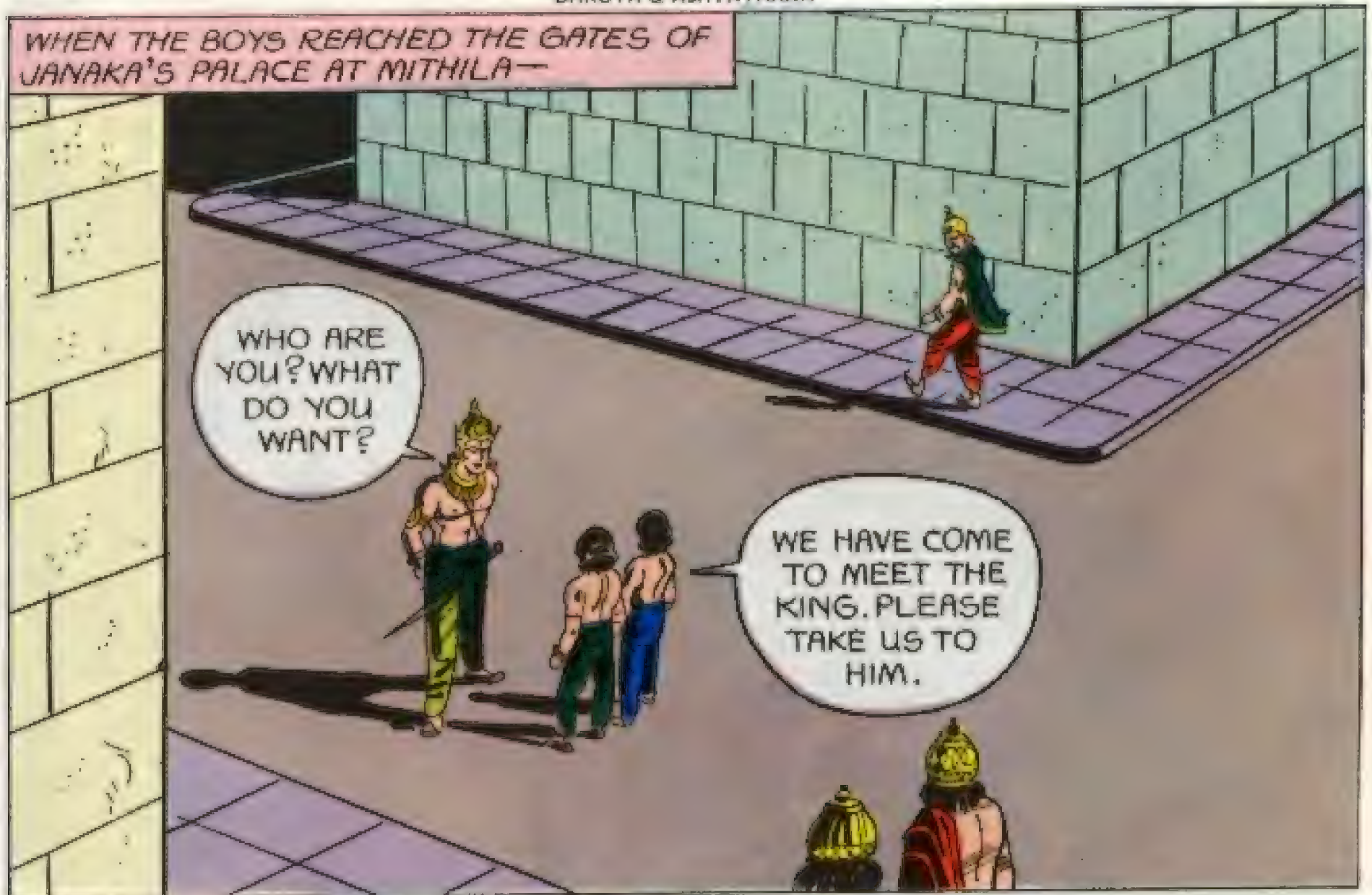
SHWETAKETU WAS WILLING.

WHEN
DO YOU
WANT TO
LEAVE?

AT
ONCE.



WHEN THE BOYS REACHED THE GATES OF JANAKA'S PALACE AT MITHILA—





THE BOYS WERE TAKEN TO JANAKA.

O KING, I HAVE HEARD OF BANDHI'S CHALLENGE AND THE FATE OF THOSE WHO FAILED TO MEET IT. I HAVE COME TO CHALLENGE BANDHI AND TO SEE HIM DESTROYED.



JANAKA WAS ASTONISHED.

HE IS JUST A CHILD. IT IS MY DUTY TO WARN HIM.



YOU SPEAK OF DEFEATING BANDHI BECAUSE YOU ARE IGNORANT OF HIS SKILL IN DEBATE. NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEFEAT HIM.



THAT'S BECAUSE HE
WAS NEVER CONFRONTED
WITH A SCHOLAR OF MY
CALIBRE. I WILL NOT GO
BACK TILL I SEE HIM
DEFEATED AND
DROWNED.



WHEN JANAKA SAW THAT ASHTAVAKRA
WAS ADAMANT—

THE BOY IS
CONFIDENT. I WILL
TEST HIS
INTELLIGENCE
BY ASKING HIM
A FEW
QUESTIONS.



IF YOU CAN ANSWER
MY QUESTIONS I'LL
LET YOU MEET
BANDHI.

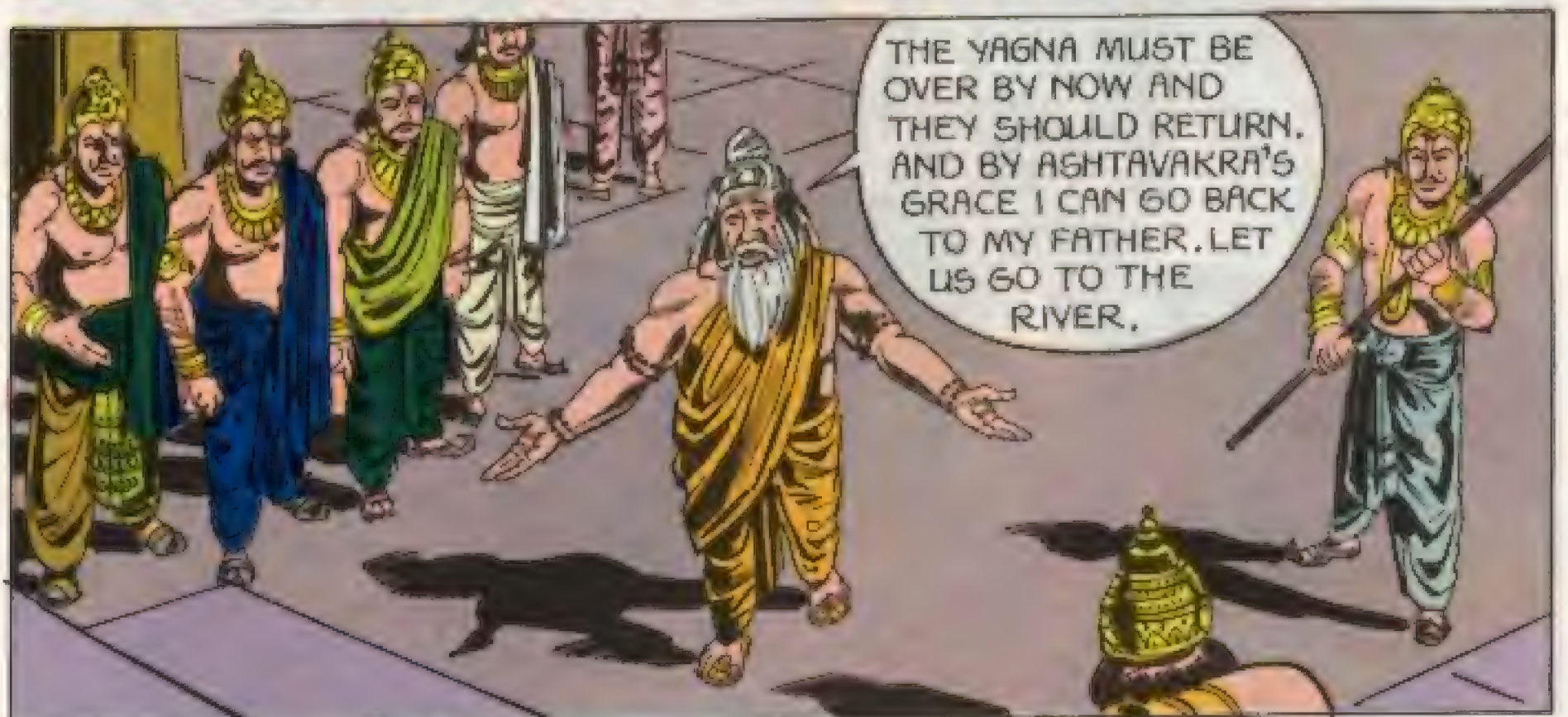
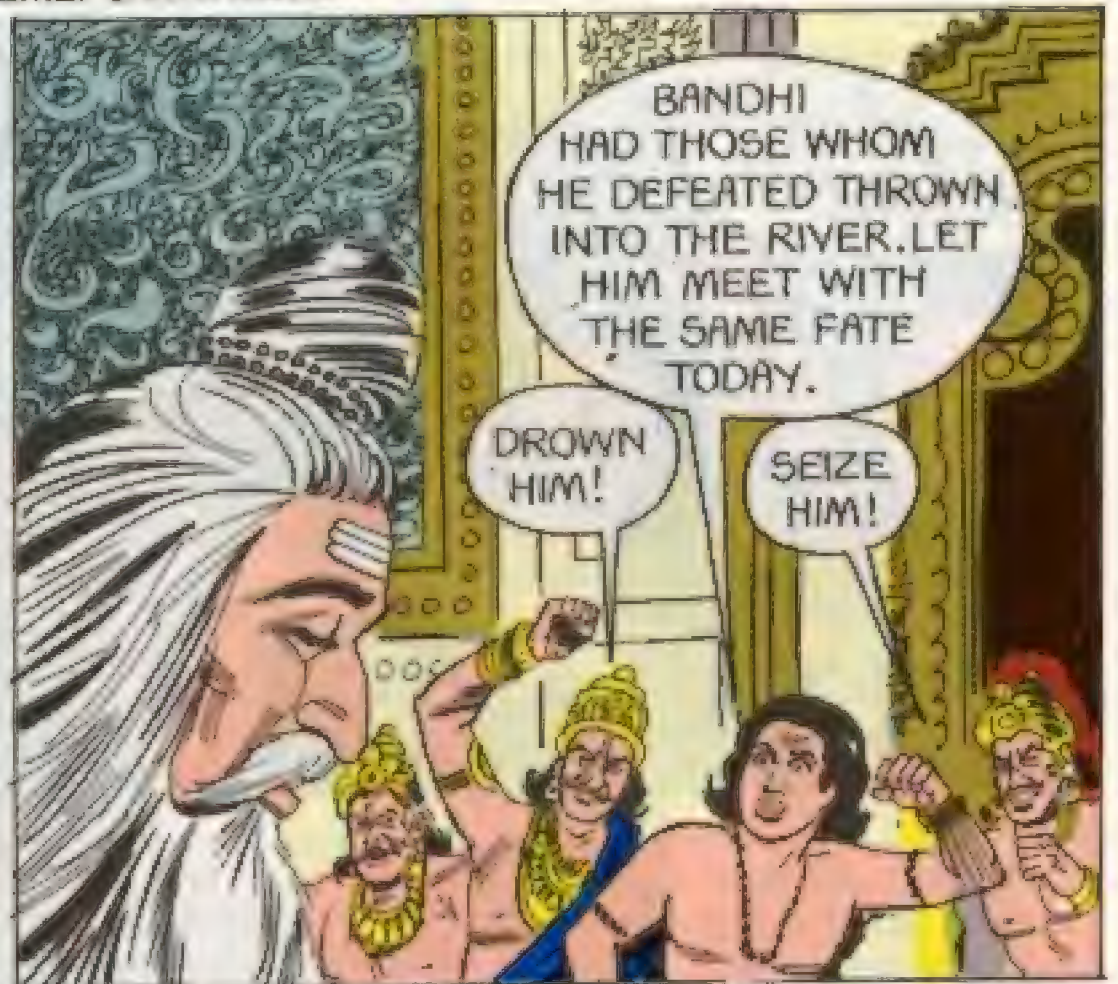


WHAT IS IT
THAT DOES
NOT MOVE
WHEN BORN?

AN EGG.









NOW WITH YOUR PERMISSION, O KING, I WILL GO BACK TO MY FATHER'S KINGDOM.



THEN AS THEY WATCHED, BANDHI JUMPED INTO THE WATER...



KAHODA, ASHTAVAKRA AND SHWETAKETU RETURNED TO THE HERMITAGE. AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVED THERE, KAHODA TOOK SUJATA AND ASHTAVAKRA TO THE RIVER FLOWING NEAR BY.

ASHTAVAKRA, TAKE A QUICK PLUNGE INTO THE RIVER AND COME OUT.



ASHTAVAKRA DID AS HE WAS TOLD. A SECOND LATER,
AS HE EMERGED FROM THE WATER—



THEY WENT TO UDDALAKA.

LOOK FATHER!
ASHTAVAKRA'S
BODY IS NO
LONGER
DEFORMED!



UDDALAKA REJOICED TO SEE HIS GRANDSON'S BODY STRAIGHT AND TALL. THE
HERMITAGE ONCE AGAIN BECAME THE HAVEN OF PEACE IT USED TO BE.



Illustrated Classics From India

Dhruva and Ashtavakra

The story of Dhruva is taken from the Bhagawat Purana. Dhruva was barely five years old when he performed penance to win the favour of Lord Narayana (Vishnu). Pleased with the faith of the child, Vishnu appeared before him and told him that he would rule the earth for 36,000 years and then occupy a very important place in heaven. And sure enough, to this day, Dhruva resides in the sky as the Pole star, referred to by many Hindus as the "Dhruva Tara" or "Dhruva Nakshatra".

According to the Vishnu Purana, the "Dhruva Nakshatra" occupies a significant position in the cosmos. It is placed at the tail of the porpoise-like celestial sphere with Lord Narayana at the centre, and, as it revolves, it causes the sun, the moon and the stars to revolve too.

The story of Ashtavakra is taken from the Mahabharata. While in exile, the Pandava princes, accompanied by Sage Lomasha, visited a number of holy places. When they reached the hermitage of Shwetaketu the sage told them the story of Ashtavakra, the nephew of Shwetaketu, who was born with eight physical deformities and overcame all odds with the gift of knowledge and sheer perseverance.

Editor: Anant Pai

Script: Shailaja Ganguly and Malati Shenoy Illustrations: Ram Waeerkar

Cover: Ramesh Umrotkar

Related Titles

Tales of Vishnu • Prahlad • Mahabharata • Dasha Avatar

Bhagawat Purana (9 volumes) • Devotees of Vishnu

ISBN 81-7508-068-X



9 788175 080683



INDIA BOOK HOUSE